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LIFE IN THE WILDS OF CENTRAL AFRICA.

BY

E. J. GLAVE.

Upon Stanley's return to Europe, after his memorable journey "Through the Dark Continent" in 1877, several influential and philanthropic gentlemen, recognizing the mutual benefit that would accrue from the opening up, by civilization, of the heart of Africa, formed themselves into a society entitled *L'Association Internationale Africaine* of which King Leopold II. was the president.

Stanley, having taken a few month's rest to recuperate his health, so enfeebled by illness and hardships during his travels, returned to the Congo River in command of a big expedition under the auspices of the new society, and he was engaged in founding along the course of the river a line of garrison stations, which should form the nucleus of a government destined, ultimately, to rule these vast territories so aptly described as the Dark Continent, and to hold in check the westerly advance of the Arab slave hunter.

In 1885, at the Berlin Conference, the powers of Europe and America recognized the government, established over the Congo basin by Stanley, as the Congo Free State. This new state was duly empowered to employ all civilized means for the institution of law and order in its territory.

In 1883 I became an officer of this association under

curious circumstances. Fascinated by the prospect of the stirring adventure and the novel experience of life in that mysterious land, I applied for a foreign appointment in the service of the Society. A few days after posting my long, imploring letter, I received a courteous reply, informing me that their expedition was already fully manned, and moreover, at any time, they needed only experienced men. At that time I was but nineteen years of age and certainly was not qualified to style myself an experienced man. But the fact of the Society deigning to reply at all gave me strong hopes, and I continued to bombard those gentlemen with my lengthy communications till one Saturday I received a cablegram, instructing me to leave Liverpool on the following Tuesday morning, proceed to Africa, and join Stanley on the banks of the Congo River.

I really believe that they gave me the appointment rather than submit to the incessant worry of receiving and answering my pestering letters.

Since that time I have lived for 6 years in the wild regions of Congoland, and for the greater part of that time the natives were my only companions, which afforded me an unusual opportunity to study their social condition; and I will employ the occasion, granted me by the American Geographical Society, in narrating facts, adventure, and anecdote tending to convey an idea of life in Central Africa, and I will endeavor to portray some of the eccentricities and peculiar characteristics of the villagers.

The Congo River is navigable from its mouth a little over a hundred miles, then a succession of wild waters and rapids, extending almost continuously from Vivi

to Stanley Pool, renders an overland march of 250 miles necessary before the navigable waters of the Upper Congo are reached. The only means of transport over this distance is by manual labor; all merchandise provisions and boats in sections or plates have to be carried or dragged overland by men. The peaceful, industrious tribes of Ba-Congo are engaged for this purpose, and they receive in payment for their services cotton stuff, brass wire and beads. Though these people are lean, slender-shanked individuals, they possess a wonderful power of endurance. They will travel 25 miles a day, tramping up and down steep high hills, and through the sweltering heat of the stifling valleys, carrying loads weighing 65 lbs weight, and in spite of their arduous duties their nourishment consists only of a few handfuls of peanuts, a banana or two, and occasionally a few inches of dried snake or a smoked field-mouse. At points along the trail markets are held; the natives of the surrounding country meet under the shelter of spreading trees and exchange the produce of their several localities. At such places the white traveller and his carriers are able to obtain provisions for their journey.

At these gatherings, honesty and peaceful behavior are sternly enforced; the man who draws a knife in anger is killed; he is stoned to death and his body thrown into a shallow pit dug in the corner of the market place, and in the mound over the grave an old flint-lock musket is driven down barrel foremost until only the stock shows above ground as a headstone warning all to respect tribal law.

On our way to the interior we passed several skele-

tons lashed to the tops of tall poles erected near the highways, and we learned that these were the ghastly relics of criminals punished thus for theft.

To men newly arrived from civilization, the village burial-place presented a curious aspect, for the final resting-place of a Lower Congo chieftain is marked by a grotesque display. All the cheap crockery which deceased had been able to collect during his lifetime is strewn in an oblong path on the grave and surrounded by a suggestive little margin of gin bottles. Each article is broken in some way so that there is no inducement for any one to despoil the sacred memorial.

By the month of July, 1883, I had ascended the Congo River from its mouth a hundred miles in a boat, marched overland through the cataract regions and reached Stanley Pool at the commencement of the navigable waters of the Upper Congo, and I had reported myself to my chief, Stanley, who was living in a grass-thatched clay house at Leopoldville, the headquarters of the expedition. At that time the settlement was in its infancy; to-day it is the most important place in Central Africa. It is the active centre of the Congo Free State, and is the commencement of navigation on the Upper Congo; here all boats are put together, all stores, arms and ammunition are distributed from this point, and every expedition equips itself at this depot.

At the time of my arrival, Stanley was planning a journey on the upper waters of the Congo. He had not visited these regions since 1877, and then the savage beings of the far interior answered his words of peace and friendship by flights of poisoned arrows and glistening spear-heads, and their war cry of *Niama ! Niama !*

(meat ! meat !) warned Stanley and his followers of the ghastly fate in store for prisoners.

Stanley was determined to establish peace with these cannibal tribes, and for this purpose he proposed to found in the most populous districts, at intervals along the river, garrison stations in charge of white officers. After I had been at Leopoldville a few weeks, Stanley sent for me to come to his house, and he then told me of his intentions of making a journey and promised to give me command of one of the new stations, or rather he would appoint me to Lukolela, on the Upper Congo, 800 miles in the interior, at present a virgin forest. He would convey me up stream in the steamer and leave me at the place, then I might build a station, and when that was accomplished I might command it.

A few days after this interview, I embarked with Stanley on board the little "En Avant," a side-wheeler thirty-five feet long, and we proceeded up stream.

In September we reached my destination, Lukolela. As soon as Stanley landed, a slave was sent by the old chief through the village to beat an iron gong and summon all the headmen to a palaver. These natives had not forgotten the white man who floated past their village in 1877 with several large canoes and a strange craft, in which the crew used long paddles and sat facing the steersman. (This was Stanley's rowboat, the "Lady Alice," which played such a part in "Through the Dark Continent.") These people having no written language, have retained in their memories the most important events which have occurred; these being constantly mentioned become in time epochs of tribal history. "Arlekaki tendelé mboka bisu kala kala," mean-

ing "when Stanley (tendelé being the best pronunciation they could give his name) passed our village a long time ago," is one of the principal marks of time, and you constantly hear it mentioned. The Central Africans are great talkers, and in all their speeches they commence by referring to incidents which happened as far back as they can remember, and they tell of all they know, no matter whether it refers to the subject or not. For instance, a native accused by another of having stolen a fowl, will preface his denial by remarking, arlekaki, etc., etc. (when Stanley passed by our village). And from that time onward he will provide a most picturesque recital of his own good deeds in peace and war. How he had fought in the van of every tribal battle and returned from the fray victorious; how when the river was overflowing and fish were difficult to catch, the whole settlement would have starved had it not been for his cleverly handled nets; he alone remained sober when the remainder of the villagers were regaling on malatu (palm wine), and after giving a glowing account of his admirable characteristics, he will demand in injured tones: Am I the man to steal a fowl?

When the natives had to an extent recovered from the unusual excitement of a white man's visit, Stanley held a meeting with the chiefs, and giving them presents of cloth, brass wire, beads, and metal ornaments, received, in return, permission for me to build a station in the forest, about a mile above their settlement.

This transaction having been satisfactorily settled, it was agreed that I should undergo the ceremony of blood-brotherhood with the old chief Mungaba. The

custom of blood-brotherhood prevails throughout Africa, and its observance is the surest way of gaining the confidence of the native chiefs. It has with them a religious significance, and they conscientiously respect the rite. All African explorers have often owed their safety to the sacredness of the pledges given by chiefs whose favor and confidence they gained in this manner.

My prospective brother, Mungaba, and I took our places side by side, and a small incision was made in Mungaba's arm just below the elbow by one of my men, and one of the natives performed a similar operation on me. Our punctured arms were then rubbed together so that the blood might mingle, and during this part of the ceremony the circle of natives composing the audience repeated in a chanting chorus the duties which the one owed to the other henceforth. If one was sick the other had to attend him; if the one was at war his blood-brother must help him; all my cloth, brass wire, and trinkets, could be claimed by Mungaba; his hut and chattels belonged to me; my father and mother were his; his wives and daughters were equally mine.

Stanley waited to see me thus accepted into the bosom of an African family, then he and the remainder of the expedition embarked and proceeded up-stream, and I was left with seventeen Zanzibaris at Lukolela, in a dense forest, which had been far more familiar with the yawn of a leopard and the trumpeting of an elephant than with the human voice.

My first work was to obtain some sort of shelter. I made a small clearing by cutting down a few trees. Here I planted a small hut which I had purchased from

the natives. To complete my settlement in its embryo condition I erected a flag-staff, and hoisted the expedition colors, and, having no one in the district liable to be entertained by the remark, I whispered to *myself* that I was now chief of Lukolela. This was of course but a temporary abode, which would answer the purpose till I could construct a dwelling more substantial of clay with grass roof.

I soon realized that in order to get a truthful impression of my dusky neighbors it would be necessary to learn their tongue, and when the natives found out my intention they took the greatest interest in teaching me the words they thought most useful. They came into my hut at all times to supply me with the words that occurred to them. Some of the visits were made at very unseasonable hours. It was anything but a delightful experience to be rudely wakened, before the break of dawn, and find a great black woolly head reaching in the mosquito net, eager to assure me that *ngungé* was the native word for mosquito. However, by a persistent course of instruction received in this way, I soon passed from halting sentences to ordinary conversation, and after I had learned their tongue I ceased to feel lonely or look upon my neighbors as strangers.

When I had grasped their language several abbreviated forms of expression revealed themselves to me.

In all their legal discussions the word *nyo*, the utterance of which is accompanied by drawing the end of the first finger down from the inner corner of the eye to the mouth, is an emphatic negative, and plays an important part in legal debate. The Central Africans

have two words for no, *té* and *nyo*. The former word is weak and unreliable, and the native is not at all offended if you doubt his word when he uses it, but he will draw his knife in earnest to support his "nyo."

When an offender against some tribal law is delivering an oration in his own defence, he at first utters all his negative sentences in the affirmative, and then reverses them to the intended sense by the use of "nyo." The use of *nyo* is a convenient means of gaining the full attention of one's hearers, as it is tribal politeness for the whole audience to have their fingers ready to chime in with the speaker's *nyo*. The effect of this custom is very curious, as a chorus of lusty voices is added to the utterance of every negative.

The most forcible of the Congo abbreviations is the one expressive of absolute fulfilment of promise. It is a sound produced by screwing up the mouth into a whistling position, then blowing a sharp breath, and at the same time passing the hand rapidly across the mouth close to the lips, making a noise like the sudden escape of steam.

I will cite an instance of the use of this expression. An old chief named Manjimba one day visited my station and sadly narrated to me how his village had been surprised by an inland tribe of hostile natives, who had killed some of his people and taken others into slavery.

"Why don't you punish your enemies? you are able to do so. You have a fine following of stalwart warriors all well armed with spears, knives, arrows and shields. Why do your men carry such arms, if they remain inactive after such an unprovoked assault?"

Manjimba answered in tones of unmistakable deter-

mination: "Yes, I intend to fight them ; before many days are passed my warriors and myself will steal through the forest and pounce upon the marauders at night. I will treat them in the way they treated me." Having uttered this threat he picked up his spears and shield, and, affably wishing me good-bye, he strode home to attend to the warlike project in hand.

After a few weeks the old chief returned to my station and stood in an imposing attitude before me. I at once recalled our last conversation, and asked him the result of the venture. A lusty puff of breath rendered into a mild explosion, by the rapid passing of the hand across his mouth of exhalation, was Manjimba's answer, after having informed me of the result of this expedition by this effective sign. A savage smile on the old warrior's face endorsed its meaning, which was, of course, that he had carried out his threat in its entirety.

In the equatorial regions of Central Africa, day and night succeed each other with but slight interval of twilight throughout the year. In these latitudes it is light in the morning at half-past five, and dark at half-past six. The rooster is the native alarm clock, his note proclaims the approach of dawn. One bird will give the signal at daybreak, his call will be answered by all the others one after another, till every rooster within hearing has taken part in the proclamation and warned everybody that it is time to get up. After this there is a lazy lull for half an hour, and then the day commences in real earnest amidst the strange hubbub of a Central African village. All the natives now leave their huts, and big log fires are soon blazing just out-

side the doorways. The old people cluster round these till the sun has risen and warmed the damp, cold morning air. The grown people defer their bathing or washing till later on in the day, when the sun is hot; but the helpless baby is not consulted as to his wishes on this subject. The Africans are a very hardy race, and I am convinced that it is to a great extent owing to their early introduction to the strengthening effect of cold water bathing. Every morning the women file down to the river edge to give their babies a bath. The mother walks knee deep into the stream, then catching the half-awakened infant by the waist, she dips him into the chilly water and holds him firmly as he wriggles beneath the surface. It always happens that several women are so occupied at the same time, and they naturally engage in conversation often of so interesting a character that the infant in the water is almost forgotten, till his frantic struggles and tugging warn the dusky parent that he is not amphibious. The child is then hauled out, but before he has time to recover, his violent spluttering and choking are again lost in the depths of the muddy stream. After repeating this operation four or five times, the mother carries the bewildered piece of ebonized humanity back to the village hut, and spreads him out on a mat in the sun to gradually recover from the shock. This seems to me to be rather a rough and uncomfortable means of providing for the survival of the fittest.

Everyday from about daybreak till noon the women work in their plantations of manioc-root, sweet potatoes, peanuts, yams and bananas. The men employ this part of the day for blacksmithing, carpentering,

hunting or fishing. When at mid-day the women who have been superintending the cooking announce that the meal is ready, all work at once ceases, and groups of ten or a dozen hungry darkies form around each earthen pot which is soon emptied by the natives' nimble fingers, which they use as both fork and spoon. When they do obtain these articles of cutlery from a white man, they punch a hole in the handle and wear them around their necks as jewelry. The staple food in this part of the world is fish and manioc-root with occasional dishes of elephant, hippopotamus, buffalo, crocodile, monkey and toasted caterpillar and paste of crushed ants.

After this meal the natives seek out the shady nooks of the village and, sheltered from the blistering heat of the noon-day sun, they attend to their odd but elaborate toilets. Far away in the heart of Africa, on the shores of the Congo River, though there are no milliners or outfitters to issue fashion plates nor a "four hundred" to lead the mode, still the dusky savages are keenly ambitious to appear stylish according to their tribal ideas and customs. Hair-dressing is one of the principal obligations and constitutes one of the duties of the "fair" sex. The woman sits down on a reed mat and the man upon whom the operation is to be performed reclines at full length, resting his head on her lap. She then ravel out his hair and with a coarse wooden instrument, resembling a child's toy rake, she combs it thoroughly until it is clear of all entanglements, and stands out all over the head in a thick bushy mass 6 or 7 inches deep. It is now generously greased with oil, then parted off into sections and cleverly woven

down close to the head, and the ends are arranged according to the prevailing taste. Sometimes series of little plaited strands like rats' tails are formed and hang around the head in a fringe; often solid plaits of hair about the size of a goat's horn are made to stand out from the head in different styles. Two of these will appear sprouting from the top of the head, or one will drop over the forehead and lie along the nose. Both men and women have their hair treated in the same way. The plaiting operation is also extended to the man's beard, the moustache and eye-brows are shaved off with an iron razor, which is a small cheese-cutter blade with a long slender handle. This is used somewhat as we hold a pen, and the stubbly hair is really chiselled off the face, no small amount of it being dragged out by the roots. A still more painful operation is the plucking out of the eye-lashes. Yet tribal disgust knows no bounds if this custom is not strictly adhered to. Often a native whilst speaking with me, has accompanied his remarks by forming a pair of nippers with the edge of his blade and his thumb and then deliberately pulling out his eyelashes, and when one eye was filled with water, and big tears rolled down his cheek then he attacked the other till the first was sufficiently recovered to admit of a renewal of the operation. This is of course a most idiotic custom in a land where the eye-lashes form such a splendid guard against the myriads of insects with which the air seems always to be charged. Yet the natives do not seem to feel any discomfort from getting anything in their eyes. They will take out the obstruction by pushing a pliant tiny stalk in between the eye and the lid, and scraping

round inside till the obstacle is removed. The natives of Lukolela have often told me that it was a mystery to them how I could hit even a buffalo with my sight obscured by eye-lashes.

Another item of the toilet is the treatment of the nails ; they must be cut close to the finger ends, and any one posing as beau or belle must have some of the nails entirely pared off exposing the quick.

All their efforts to improve their natural physique are unsightly disfigurements. Naturally they have beautiful regular teeth, but in that condition they do not appeal to the native taste. Some of the front teeth, often all of them, must be cut away into sharp points. The method of effecting this is the most nerve-shattering ordeal which Congo society suffers. The village blacksmith takes the patient's head between his knees, then with a small chisel-shaped instrument, and a block of wood as a mallet, roughly chips the teeth to the shape desired. The teeth thus rudely robbed of the protecting enamel, soon decay and break off, and the mouth studded with short blackened stumps is a most repulsive sight.

The natives are very conservative, and what their forefathers did before them they are quite content with now, no matter how painful or inconsistent the obligation may be.

Each tribe has a different way of cicatrising face and body. The Ba Bangi have rows of little gashes cut across temples and forehead. The Cannibal Bangala have a line of large pimple-like protuberances running right down the forehead to the extreme end of the nose, resembling a thread of large black beads. The Ngombé

people supplement this by carving the same ornamentation in a half circle from the bottom of the ear to the corner of the mouth. The Balolo succeed in disfiguring themselves more hideously than all the others. They raise large uneven bumps between the eyes and the cheeks and on the chin. These are cut in childhood and are repeatedly dug around and aggravated till the scarred bump is about the size and shape of half a walnut shell. Some of this tribe devote attention to the cultivation of bumps on the nose, and the result seems to suggest that the final effort was to have the extreme end of the organ adorned with a grotesque mound of scarred flesh. Castings of some of these faces would make effective masks for pantomime hobgoblins.

The sole attire of these natives is a small loin cloth neatly and artistically woven from the sinews of pineapple leaf.

To be fully dressed these Central Africans must smear their bodies liberally with a paste composed of powdered red-wood (Ngula) and palm oil. This operation is a substitute for bathing and refreshing themselves.

When all the items of the toilet have been properly attended to, the popular idea of beauty does not depend on the result; the Mwasi Mompala (the pretty woman) according to the choice of one tribe is not at all the taste of another district. At Lukolela admiration was expressed for a long neck; she might squint and be bowlegged, but these defects counted as naught if she had a long neck (nkingu isanda). In another section of the land corpulency was the recognized form of beauty, and one tribe acknowledged only as a pretty woman her

of a very light color. The color of the natives varies very much, and ranges from a blue-black to a very light reddish-brown.

When I had been living amongst the natives some time, they felt sufficient interest in me to suggest that I should submit to some of the operations decreed by tribal habit. They were anxious that I should have my forehead and temples decorated with their national tattoo scars. They tried to persuade me to allow my hair to grow long and they would then plait it in designs like their own. They suggested that their village blacksmith should chip my teeth to sharp points, and expressed their disgust at my eye-lashes by calling me "misu-nkonge" (man of eye-lashes). Much as I wished to please my dusky friends, I failed to appreciate the charity of their wishes. They had not reflected that I hoped some day to return to my native land. It was, however, satisfactory and consoling to be told that if I would follow their customs, and then were a little blacker, I should be Mobali-Mompala, a good-looking fellow.

Amongst travellers the natives are hospitable, but their generosity is tempered by caution. If one man has a gourd of native wine he will not trust it in any one's hands; he will measure the allowance which he intends a friend to have. I have often given a man a spoonful of salt as a present; the recipient would not use this for cooking purposes, but would slowly consume it by occasionally dipping the end of his tongue into it. If a friend should ask for a taste of the luxury, he would not trust the stranger's tongue into the supply, but he would himself take a small pinch and place

it on the finger end, then invite the friend to take it with his tongue, at the same time he would cover the salt over with his hand.

I found that at Lukolela I was in the centre of a rich hunting country. The woods around my station and the vast swamp plains on the opposite shore were the feeding grounds of elephant, buffalo, hippopotami and antelopes.

Prowess in the hunting field at once obtains for the white traveller the respect and confidence of the natives. Not only do they admire the man who will risk the wild charge of a wounded bull or a rogue elephant, but they have an earnest appreciation for any influence which can furnish a meat supply. Owing to my success in the hunting field, I received the name of Makula, literally "arrows." They wished to call me *cart-ridges*, but they had not a native word, so they supplied a name the nearest they had to it. I obtained this proud title merely by a fluke. At the time of my first arrival at Lukolela, I knew but very little about a rifle. I foolishly imagined that I could fire and hit an animal in the head or heart or any other part of the body I decided upon, and then without further trouble I might have a broiled steak for the next meal! One day an excited villager rushed into my clearing and gasped out the news that a big buffalo had taken possession of his wife's plantation and threatened to destroy all her crops. My dusky friend implored me to go and kill the beast. At that time I was not acquainted with the hasty temperament and revengeful disposition of these animals, so I promptly accepted the invitation despite my inexperience. As I tramped off on my errand of

slaughter, a crowd of natives followed, and when we neared the place where the animal was supposed to be, all climbed into trees so as to see from safe quarters the interesting developments which might result from the competition between a Snyder rifle and an ill-tempered bull buffalo. Even the man who had invited me to this contest deserted me when we arrived in the vicinity of the game. In a few hurried whispers and some ingeniously suggestive signs, I was urged to believe that it was a great advantage to conduct such a venture alone. It was no time for argument, so I crept along stealthily through the long grass in the direction pointed out, and very soon I could see, just a little ahead of me, the shaggy old buffalo leisurely cropping off the tender leaves in a peanut patch. As I cautiously levelled my rifle above the grass the great brute, about thirty yards away, caught sight of me; he stretched out his neck and switched his tail in a very angry manner, and I at once lost confidence in my ability as a slayer of big game. My previous calculations with regard to this shooting question had not been carried on under such formidable conditions; however, my reputation was at stake, so with unsteady aim I pointed my rifle and fired for a spot behind the shoulder. The buffalo staggered for a few moments, then fell heavily to the ground dead. Upon examining the carcass, I found that my ball had entered the brain, two feet from the place I had aimed at! The natives were amazed at a single bullet killing a tough brute like a buffalo; not knowing the truth of my fluke shot, they attributed the animal's death to my clever shooting. And they decided to duly record the event by bestowing on me

the native name Makula, an envied title which the native hunter can only earn by attacking on foot elephant and hippopotamus with a spear blade ; and I stole the reputation by a chance shot.

The natives living around my station were a light-hearted friendly people, and it required but a little tact and patience to preserve at all times friendly relations with them. Considering their wild environment, the Central Africans are wonderfully educated ; they aim to acquire ability which will enable them to enjoy the benefits of their surroundings and will also aid them to battle with the perils and difficulties attending life in these regions.

The boys' favorite pastime is mimic warfare ; sides are formed and they attack each other with blunted spears and wooden knives, and at a very early age become excellent marksmen. Such a training can be received none too early, for often when only 11 or 12 years old the young African fights to the death in defence of the village huts.

Every boy also becomes an expert swimmer and paddler, learns how to shape out iron weapons and wooden utensils, and by accompanying the parents on fishing and hunting expeditions, becomes thoroughly acquainted with the habits of the animal world and is instructed how to make and arrange nets and traps.

The Congo River teems with fine delicious fish and the woods everywhere are scarred by tracks of big game, principally elephants and buffaloes.

The young girls receive from their mothers instruction in the various domestic duties which they will in after life be called upon to perform.

When ten years old the Congo negress has her own little plantation to attend to, and she has learned how to properly cook the manioc, sweet potatoes and yams she has grown ; moreover she can toast to perfection a hippo or buffalo steak, knows each kind of insect and caterpillar that graces the Congo bill of fare.

By day they all define the hour by the position of the sun in the heavens, and they reckon the days by the moon's shape.

It is very difficult to impress upon the natives the vast extent of the white man's land (Mputu). They have seen so few white men, comparatively speaking, that they cannot realize our having a big country. Upon my asking them to draw in the sand the relative sizes of Mputu and their own little village, they would represent the latter by an immense circle several yards in diameter, but our country would be defined by a tiny ring a few inches in diameter.

Although the coast natives have been thoroughly demoralized by the introduction of strong liquor, its importation into the interior is sternly prohibited, and the natives on the Upper Congo have nothing stronger than *malafu* or palm wine, the milky sap of the palm tree. When fresh it is exceedingly refreshing and palatable, but in a day or two it becomes sour and is then intoxicating.

There is an animal on the Congo, which, from Paul du Chaillu's description of the gorilla, I should consider is the same animal ; by the Zanzibaris it is called *soko*, by the natives *esumbu*. It is brown-haired and large-eared with round face, smooth except the eyebrows and a scanty beard. This large monkey, if we are to be-

lieve the Congo negro, is descended from a man, who in ages past had drifted into debt and difficulty in his village and then fled to the woods to escape his creditors, and while waiting for his troubles to blow over, his limbs changed their shape and his body became covered with long hair. The women are much frightened of this animal, believing that he will carry away them and their children as captives if he has the opportunity. The actions of these animals are certainly very remarkable. I have heard a family of them making a peculiar noise like the rattle of drums, which is produced by beating on their chests. At times these sounds would cease, evidently at a given signal from the leader of their simian orchestra, then the air would be filled with shrill cries such as one hears from a large gathering of school children when school is dismissed.

The spirit of the Central African's religion is the dread of evil spirits. He believes that an unseen power is always present seeking opportunities to injure mankind. His superstitious mind attributes to this mysterious and malignant influence all reverses and disasters which he may suffer through life. When the crops fail the *moloki* or evil spirit is blamed for the misfortune; and if they fail to kill their game or win the battle it is credited to the same phantom maliciousness. Everywhere this antagonistic influence is lurking—in trees, in the stream, in the bodies of men, beasts, and birds, and reptiles the evil spirit is hiding, adopting the guise most convenient for the intent.

The African has no idea of gratitude for any beneficial surroundings. He feels that he has a right to life in a land where the forests are full of game, the

river teeming with fish, and the soil nourishing to perfection crops of fruit and vegetables. Life to him seems no free gift, but rather something to be dexterously snatched from the hand of adverse circumstances. Let him escape unhurt all the dangers incidental to his search for mere subsistence, and let him amass wealth, yet he cannot enjoy these benefits. Everything in earth and sky threatens his existence. He is always liable to an attack from savage beast and venomous reptile, to sickness and the slave raiders.

The imagination of the savage surrounds life with awe and mystery. He is continually in fear. Influences obnoxious to him lie concealed in every object. Trees, stones, herbs, all contain imprisoned spirits which, if released, may rend and destroy him. When he is least conscious of it he may be offending some spirit with power to work him ill. Sleeping, eating, drinking, canoeing, hunting, fishing, and fighting, he must be protected by ceremonies and observances from hostile influences, and he must be provided with charms for every season and occasion. The necessity for these safeguards has given rise to an elaborate system, and has created a mystical class called *nganga* or charm doctors. These individuals are the interpreters of the relations between man and the unseen powers. They dismiss evil spirits, furnish charms, and prescribe and regulate all ceremonial rites. A charm doctor can discover who it was that caused the old chief to sicken and die, or even who blighted the palm trees and dried up the sap ; and, by his insight into the spirit world, he can discover the culprit, can interpret dreams, and predict the coming events.

The nganga or medicine man is always a conspicuous figure in a village. He wears a tall hat of animal skin, around his neck hang strings of specimens of his wares, and slung around his shoulders are little parcels of charms into which are stuck birds' feathers. Metal rings, to which mysterious little packages are attached, clash and clang as he walks, serving, together with a liberal assortment of iron bells, attached to his person, to announce his presence; and, as if the body did not offer a sufficient surface to display all his magical outfit, he carries, suspended from his left shoulder, in a large woven pocket, a load of wonder-working material, a curious assortment of preventives, eagles' claws and feathers, fish bones, antelope horns, leopard teeth, tails and heads of snakes, flint stones, hairs of the elephant's tail, perforated stones, different colored chalks, eccentric shaped roots, various herbs, etc. His idea in carrying around this property is that thus equipped he can administer some devil-proof mixture to suffering humanity.

The flight of the poisonous arrow, the rush of the maddened buffalo, or the venomous bite of the adder can be averted by the purchase of these charms, and the troubled waters of the Congo can be crossed in safety by the fisherman's frail craft. The Moloki, or evil spirit, ever ready to pounce upon humanity, is checked by the power of the Nganga, and halts at his whistle through an antelope's horn, or the waving of a bunch of feathers.

During the earlier part of my residence at Lukolela the natives supposed that I was one of the wonder-working individuals; my strange belongings, watch,

compass, rifle, revolver, field glasses suggested this idea which I did not deny, and on several occasions I was able to turn this to account. Once several large canoes put into my beach and the paddlers swarmed up to my hut to see me and hear me talk ; my vocabulary was a small one at that time, but I was ambitious and endeavored to explain to them all I knew of Europe, Asia and America. My audience was evidently very much entertained, and they decided to carry away a souvenir of the occasion by stealing my only saucepan. This utensil I was determined should be returned, so I called together some of the headmen, explained my loss and told them that if the saucepan was not returned by sun-down I wished them to come to my house and I would give them an exhibition of my mystic powers. The saucepan was not returned by the time stipulated, and the chiefs arrived. Previous to their arrival I had poured out a little brandy in a cup. When they were seated I gravely informed them that as the saucepan was not returned, I would give them an exhibition of my supernatural powers, and then I asked if any of them had ever seen water on fire. To which question they replied no, and said they did not believe water would burn. When I carelessly put fire to the brandy, they were aghast with astonishment. Now, I said, my saucepan must be returned by sunrise to-morrow ; if it is not, I will set the whole river on fire ! Fortunately I was spared the necessity of carrying out this dreadful threat.

To his religious functions the charm doctor unites those of surgeon and physician, and in this capacity displays considerable knowledge.

In the extraction of rude bullets, fired from old flintlocks, the Nganga displays great skill, although he always attributes such ability to the agency of his wonder-working charms.

The natives have a strange combination of characteristics; they are light-hearted, plucky, industrious and stanch friends, but still they are pitilessly cruel, and delight to witness human suffering and the spilling of human blood.

Horrible ceremonies result from the belief that death leads but to another life, to be continued under much the same conditions as the life they are now living. A chief thinks that if, when he enters into this new existence, he is accompanied by a sufficient following of slaves, he will be entitled to the same rank in the next world as he holds in this, and from this belief arises the hideous ceremony of slaughtering innocent slaves. Upon the death of a chief owning fifty slaves, twenty or twenty-five of these will be executed so that their spirits may accompany their dead master to the next world. The men are decapitated, the women strangled. When a woman is to be sacrificed she is adorned with bright metal bangles; her toilet is carefully attended to, her hair neatly parted, and she is draped with bright cotton cloth. Her hands are then pinioned behind and she is then suspended by the neck from a limb of a tree, and whilst the body swings in mid-air its convulsive movements are imitated with savage gusto by the spectators.

Upon the occasion of an execution all peaceful occupation is thrown aside, and old and young of both sexes give themselves up to the indulgence of the ghastly spectacle.

At early morn a peculiar slow beating on the wooden drums announces to the savage audience that an execution is about to take place.

The natives hurriedly leave their huts and very soon groups of men and women and children form themselves into circles, and excitedly perform dances, accompanied by boisterous singing, blasts from war-horns and drumming. When the slave is produced and preparations are made for his execution, he is at once surrounded by a brutal mob, which indulges in drunken mimicry of the contortions of face which the pain caused by the cruel torture forces him to show, and their frenzy increases till the climax is reached, when the executioner ends the poor wretch's misery by striking off his head.

One who has lived for some time in Central Africa comes to understand the little impression that acts of the most atrocious and wanton cruelty make on the savage mind. Surrounded from childhood by scenes of bloodshed and torture, their holidays and great ceremonies marked by massacres of slaves, the mildest and most sensitive native becomes brutalized and callous, and if this is so with the free, what must be the effect on the slave, torn when a child from its mother and doomed to privation and hardship even in its infancy?

Cannibalism and human sacrifices are attendant upon slavery. The man, who purchases another for a few fathoms of cloth or a few beads, buys him body and soul to do with just as he will. He will kill him to signalize the death of a freeman, or he may sell him for food to an Ubangi cannibal.

Even the declaration of peace demands the death of

a slave. Whilst up the Ubangi River, upon approaching the large settlement of Ndisi, I was horrified to see a corpse suspended by the heels from a bar lashed at the top of two tall poles. It had evidently been there about a week and was frightfully decomposed. Upon reaching a neighboring village we learned the reason of this sacrifice. Old Ndisi had been at war with a neighboring tribe for several years, and both parties had come to a peaceful understanding, and they decided to celebrate the event by hanging up a slave by the heels till he died.

There are two kinds of slavery in Africa, inter-tribal and that carried on by the Arabs. The latter is by far the most important.

The dimensions of slavery in Central Africa are increasing. The Arab man-hunter, fascinated by the rich profits from his slaves and ivory, does not retire from business; he buys more guns, hires more murderers and increases the sphere of his operations.

Vast armies of Zanzibaris and Manyemas, officered by Arabs, are constantly engaged in the capture of the natives and the robbery of their ivory. The Arabs make no pretence to legitimate commerce; with their superior weapons and overwhelming numbers they can without difficulty overcome the poorly armed natives. Actually the slave traffic is subservient to the acquisition of ivory, for the Arabs capture the natives and then ransom them for ivory. Their plan of action is to stealthily surround a village by night, then at early dawn to fire off a few muskets to intimidate the villagers. Bewildered at the rude awakening, the poor creatures rush out of their huts and fall an easy prey

to the inhuman villains who leap into the village from all sides. All who resist are shot down or stabbed, and the remainder, old and young, are taken prisoners and are herded into a stockaded pen and there guarded night and day.

The Arabs then open up negotiations with the surrounding villages and exchange their captives for ivory. One big tusk weighing sixty-five pounds will grant the release of one slave. The Arabs remain in such a camp till the district is drained of its ivory, then the slaves who have not been ransomed are loaded down with ivory, and the merciless pillagers move along to a new hunting ground. The cunning Arabs purposely keep the native tribes at enmity amongst themselves by employing some as allies against a neighboring settlement. In the cannibal regions the payment for such service is meat, or to be more explicit, the dead bodies of those cruelly slain in the raids. The Arabs encourage the most brutal and barbarous customs among the interior tribes. Ceremonies involving human sacrifice and cannibal orgies create a demand for slaves, which the Arab will supply when the payment is ivory. The Arabs are not merely a few brigand bands scattered over the land, but a powerful, well-organized system of robbery and persecution, extending throughout the heart of Africa.

The slavers have several strongholds in Central Africa, the principal being Tabora, Karema, Kasongo, Nyangwé, and Stanley Falls. Large hordes of hired robbers branch out into all directions from these dépôts and swarm over the whole land. They start out with their muskets and a few loads of ammunition, and re-

turn with slaves and ivory, obtained by theft and murder. The ivory eventually reaches Zanzibar on the east coast. Every tusk, already foully purchased by innocent lives, demands still more sacrifice before the delicate substance, daintily carved, graces some fair one's boudoir, where amidst its refined surroundings its bloody history is buried. It has been frequently said by travellers who have followed the trail of the slaver that so littered is the way with whitened skeleton and skull that these grim relics would guide you to the coast. It is a wonder that any of these carriers reach their destination. Given enough food only to keep life flickering in their emaciated bodies, covered with festering sores from the chafing slave fork and chain, goaded by the cruel lash from morning till night, they are driven along the trail, suffering all the indignities and persecutions which the devilish minds of their vicious masters can invent and carry out.

The occupation of Central Africa by the European powers must inevitably hasten the solution of the giant problem—how to suppress slavery? The Germans, British, French, Congo Free State have portioned out amongst themselves the whole of Equatorial Africa. Previous to this occupation it was the actual duty of no government to interfere in Central African politics; but now the European powers must establish law and order in their territories. The Arab slavers will not desist from their fiendish calling till compelled by force. The keys which they hold to a rich source of profit in Central Africa cannot be wrested from them without a fierce struggle.

The suppression of slavery is a monster undertaking,

but stern measures for its accomplishment are being carried out with grand deliberation. The Congo Free State, the Germans and the British, are all the time strengthening their forces and pushing on into the interior, contracting the Arab's sphere of operations into smaller limits. . The Arab slavers, cut off from their supplies of ammunition from the coast and barred from northern support, must in a few years' time be crushed by the well-armed forces of civilization and its native allies.

No one has done more for Africa than Stanley ; his tiny trails are being worn into broad rows ; whole nations are following in his footsteps, determined to establish law and order at all cost. A noble chapter is being added to African history. A grand response is being given to the cry for justice from the helpless slave. The downfall of the Arab slaver is imminent, and the illumination of the Dark Continent is being heroically conducted.